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Joint Airpower as Vicious Diplomacy:

A Second Look

by

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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, the Department of the Navy, or the Department of the Air Force.

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the intersection point between the strategic and operational levels of war. It recommends that aerial coercion become a formal part of Joint Doctrine because 1) Engagement and Enlargement created new military requirements that remain uncovered, 2) there already are well-developed methods of aerial coercion available for doctrinal use, and 3) the problems that bedeviled aerial coercion in the past are no longer insurmountable.

In A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, President Clinton rightfully observed that when he took office in 1992 the United States and its allies faced "a radically transformed security environment."¹ Our national security strategy of the last 50 years--containment and nuclear deterrence--no longer applied. To liberal internationalists within the administration, this historical watershed seemingly provided the opportunity to reverse the distorting effects of the Cold War, to include the militarization of the American economy by an unprecedentedly large military-industrial complex. In 1993, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin initiated a Bottom-Up Review (BUR) to identify what post-Cold War threats existed (or would exist in the immediate future), and to suggest a military force structure that would answer these threats. Numerous progressives and peace advocates expected the BUR to slash military spending, gut our forces, and provide a "peace dividend" that would then prop up sorely underfunded social programs. By all accounts, those who expected these results were disappointed. By assuming a potential threat of two near-simultaneous regional conflicts to American interests, the Bottom-Up Review did not yield a "peace dividend." Yes, it trimmed military spending, but it was a holding action more than anything else. Since the armed services were organizationally incapable of redefining themselves in the few short years between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the BUR, the two-conflict model provided them additional time to prepare for the roles and missions debate that inevitably would come. The time for that debate is now here.

The Quadrennial Review and stagnant near-term defense budgets will not only pressure the armed services to transfer, consolidate, or relinquish traditional roles and missions, they will also compel them to maximize efficiency through the innovative use of joint capabilities, concepts, and

forces. In the latter case, American airmen have recently argued that an ideal instrument of power projection and coercive diplomacy is airpower (as a medium employed by all four services, either singly or combined with other arms). This assertion was not always possible. Prior to 1945, airpower was a blunt instrument of industrialized, "Mastadon" warfare; in the hands of cold warriors like Curtis LeMay, it became a symbol of nuclear annihilation; and in the hands of trans- and post-Vietnam leaders it lost its doctrinal bearings, i.e., airmen shifted their focus to weapon systems, not as means but as ends in themselves. In other words, until the mid-1980s airpower often represented everything that was either unsubtle or unfocused in war. However, in the immediate future, believers argue, it will represent the opposite. In the 21st century, only airpower will have the capacity to operate across the spectrum of conflict, to include asymmetric "hyperwar" at one extreme (where you simultaneously attack a variety of enemy vulnerabilities at any level of war) and the use of aerospace power as a discrete, peacetime instrument of coercive diplomacy at the other (where you seek changes in political behavior through the threat or actual use of well-defined force).

Unfortunately, current joint doctrine not only remains land-centered, it also fails to reflect the recent (and radical) improvements made in the utility of air forces. Basic joint doctrine, in other words, is already outdated. Yes, it acknowledges that airpower is becoming an increasingly discriminate tool of war, but a reader of Joint Publication 1 ("Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States"), will search in vain for an explication of aerial coercion, either in peace or the strategic-operational levels of war. As a result, the purpose of this paper is to argue that aerial coercion should become a formal part of joint doctrine, both as a concept and method of political suasion. American airpower (as a critical component

of the joint team) now has the necessary range, speed, lethality, and precision to serve as a possible (and perhaps preferred) first option in the coercion of political opponents. To support this basic thesis, this paper will 1) explain why our current national security strategy virtually demands the inclusion of aerial coercion into formal joint doctrine; 2) define the tools and types of aerial coercion available to civilian and military elites, with a particular emphasis on those in charge of unified and specified commands; 3) review the very real problems associated with air-centered coercion and some possible ways to solve them; and 4) briefly demonstrate the growing utility of aerial coercion by contrasting its misuse in Vietnam (Operation Rolling Thunder, 1965-1968) with its alleged success in Bosnia (Operation Delibert Force, August-September 1995). By accomplishing these four basic steps we will see that aerial coercion is hardly a precise science, but our understanding of it has improved sufficiently that it should become a formal part of joint doctrine.

I. Aerial coercion: how does it support our national security strategy?

In 1992, the newly installed Clinton administration was encircled by friends and deprived of enemies. As a result, it had a choice to make. It could adopt a foreign policy based on realism, legal internationalism, human rights, or any combination of the three.² Realism, of course, represents the Hobbesian view of unreconstructed cold warriors like Henry Kissinger, "Fortress America" populists like Jesse Helms, and a large percentage of the American officer corps, who believe that human beings, and the political systems they create, are basically corrupt. Because our present (and anarchic) nation-state system is a symptom of our corruption, realists argue, American foreign policy should not focus on promoting justice or other "peripheral" values, but on preserving our narrow national interests. In other words,

national security is our most important external concern, and the preservation of a balance of power, if not overt primacy or global hegemony, is our ultimate goal. Anything that smacks of foreign policy as good works violates the responsibility of our leaders to first and foremost protect the security and interests of American citizens, both at home and abroad.

Second, the Clinton administration could have championed the international rule of law, which insists that nation-states comply with the legal obligations established by United Nations resolutions, the World Court, the Hague and Geneva Conventions, and customary law (if accepted by a significant number of nations over time). The great strength of the tradition is that it establishes predictability in international relations and provides agreed-upon rules of behavior, while still tolerating cultural differences (within limits) over such concepts as justice and individual rights.

Last, the Clinton Administration could have adopted a human rights-based approach, or what Michael Mandelbaum (a realist) derisively calls the "foreign policy of Mother Teresa."³ Advocates of this approach, including John Kenneth Galbraith (see his recent The Good Society, 1996), argue that the realist approach, for example, is too selfish and puny to effectively cope with a growing number of problems that require collective solutions, including environmental degradation and global prosperity so unequal that the entire African continent accounts for only 1.7% of the world's GNP.⁴ Further, the humanitarian law movement, although concerned with certain types of equality and fairness, does have a fatal flaw--its respect for national sovereignty, and the noninterference of one state in the internal affairs of another--that disqualifies it as a comprehensive alternative to the potential amorality of realism, especially "In a world where protected by the non-intervention principle, 123 states practice torture or ill-treatment of prisoners;

. . . where 40,000 children die daily of preventable diseases; and where millions--especially women--live hopeless and wretched lives"⁵ In other words, both realism and legal internationalism wrongly accept and tolerate the status quo. Not only do they respect the much-abused principle of national sovereignty, they also tolerate the unequal distribution of global power and wealth. As a result, human rights advocates argue, we need a foreign policy that practices the "politics of global responsibility," and not just changes the status quo at the margins. The state must provide not only order, but justice. It must be "a moral agent to bring about progressive global and social change."⁶ Last, it must act proactively to create a global society characterized by non-violence, individual rights, economic fairness, ecological sustainability, and collective security arrangements used to pressure violators back into the community of nations.⁷

From the three options available to it, or combination of options, the Clinton administration initially adopted human rights as the foundation of its foreign policy, while buttressing it with an additional emphasis on international law and collective security. Also known as pluralism or liberal internationalism, the administration's foreign policy identified the prevention or minimization of human suffering as a core US national interest, even though our subsequent interventions (under the guise of UN or NATO sponsorship) within Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia interfered with the internal affairs of these "nations." Clearly, President Clinton, then-National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, and other administration insiders were (and are) proactive children of the Enlightenment. They believe that history is not cyclical, but an unfolding of human progress; that governments can speed up this progress by promoting liberal values, including global democracy, human rights, and economic well-being; and that wars are primarily caused

by correctable problems such as miscommunication, poor education (about the mutual economic interdependence of nations, for example), or the lingering influence of retrograde castes (like communist parties or military juntas). As a result, it was inevitable that a new form of "pragmatic Wilsonianism" would speed the arrival of a global community based on peace and trade.

Unfortunately, the chinks in liberal internationalism grew into large fissures in Somalia and Bosnia. To its credit, the Clinton administration recognized these fissures and adopted a more balanced approach in A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (1996). In terms of our national interests, the document emphasizes two realist imperatives ("to enhance our security by maintaining a strong defense" and "to open foreign markets and spur economic growth") and a pluralistic obligation to promote democracy and human rights abroad.⁸ In terms of national objectives, Engagement and Enlargement is again a mix of the liberal and the hard-headed, to include promoting active participation in multilateral peace operations and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Last, its eclectic grand strategy emphasizes preventive diplomacy, selective engagement, cooperative security, and even a dash of global primacy. The point we need to make here is obvious--the Clinton administration did retreat and adopt a more realistic national security strategy, but it did not abandon its commitment to liberal internationalism. What we will see in the near-future, therefore, is a two-track policy that first and foremost promotes those international ties that bind, while also protecting American interests in an environment still determined by the nation-state, regardless of how increasingly weak it might become.

Here then is the crux of the matter in using aerial coercion by the national command authority (NCA) and regional CINCs, either in peacetime or all three levels of war. When it comes to the communitarian ideals of the Clinton administration, it does not really matter what military leaders think. They may fulminate, sputter, and complain that current civilian elites are poor and unenthusiastic practitioners of *realpolitik*, but these callow idealists will increasingly dominate our government and, according to Secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall, "assume an increasingly large role in leading our forces."⁹ Therefore, if the national security strategy of the NCA remains largely unchanged, e.g., if it continues to promote human rights and democracy abroad, while also advocating free markets and economic growth, the armed services will have to adapt their military capabilities and practices to support a naturally subversive (and destabilizing) strategy!

Consider our automatic, unthinking support for capitalist economies, for example. Since they are the most dynamic and therefore revolutionary form of social organization ever devised, is it wrong to ask if they stabilize local socio-political conditions and rapidly lead to peace, or if they actually provide a delayed, detoured, bumpy, and destructive path to economic health?¹⁰ In the case of the 1920s, global technological advances and increased productivity quickly favored industrial capacity over demand. As a result, wages plummeted and people ceased buying goods. Demand fell further, inventories rose, and factory production dropped. Companies subsequently had to operate in smaller markets, they employed fewer workers, and thus contributed to a new cycle of lower demand. As a result, the explosion in technological innovation and productivity in the 1920s did yield unprecedented

affluence in the Western world from 1950 through 1975, but not before whole populations suffered through the Great Depression and World War II. In other words, the more capitalism spreads, the more change people have to endure, the more risks governments will have to take, and the more destruction will accompany creation. (The destruction can include a rise in inequality, dwindling jobs and wages, "casino economies" subject to the whimsies of foreign investors, environmental plunder, and the collapse of well-functioning traditional rural communities.)¹¹

Therefore, if a basic pillar of Engagement and Enlargement actually aggravates the current and future security problems of the United States, to include the growing independence of free markets from the control of sovereign states, will our recent emphasis on joint conventional theater-level warfare adequately serve our needs in the 21st century? As the requirement for precision engagement in Joint Vision 2010 illustrates, the answer is "no." Large-scale war, whether joint or not, is a dying business. Its utility as a diplomatic tool has decreased markedly with the growing strength of liberal internationalism, supranational organizations, non-state actors, and a myriad of trade associations. However, if large-scale war is something not to be fought, that does not prevent the NCA and unified/regional commanders from using its tools to help support our national security and military strategies, and to help politically manage an increasingly complex world.¹² They need these tools to perform a variety of roles and missions, ranging from theater-level war to the scalpel-like use of force as a peacetime vehicle for signal-sending and political coercion, among other options. Within this context, and as already suggested, joint doctrine should identify aerial coercion as a military instrument

of first resort in "vicious diplomacy." Because US airpower will soon be able to find, fix, and target anything in the world in real time, it will be an ideal trump card for preponderant and yet restrained attempts at influence. However, to truly understand how airpower is the ideal instrument to answer the pluralistic demands of the NCA and unified/regional CINCs, we turn now to provide a notional description of just what aerial coercion is.

II. Aerial coercion: definitions, tools, and types.

If it is not already clear, aerial coercion is an effort to alter an opponent's political behavior by influencing his decision making calculus. It is not defined by the intentions or behavior of the coercer, but by the psychology of his opponent, who must perform a cost-benefit analysis over whether to stop or start a particular course of action. In order to succeed, aerial coercion must 1) increase the perceived cost of an action, 2) raise the certainty that an opponent will suffer those costs, 3) lower an opponent's expected benefits, or 4) clearly reduce his probability of success. If any one of these steps causes an adversary to abandon his political objectives long before he fully employs his armed forces or suffers a military defeat, one can conclude that coercion worked.¹³ To highlight these concepts more thoroughly, it is helpful to look at the work of Thomas Schelling.

The use of aerial coercion can occur in peacetime and across the spectrum of conflict. It flowered as an idea in the 1950s and 1960s, when the American theory of conventional high altitude, precision, daylight bombardment against the key nodes of an opponent's industrial heartland evolved into deterrence theory. As a result of this transformation, Strategic Air Command increasingly focused on developing

mechanistic targeting plans for nuclear war, while the continued development of coercion as a concept and instrument of political suasion became the responsibility of civilian strategists like Bernard Brodie, Herman Kahn, William Kaufman, Albert Wohlstetter, and Thomas Schelling. Schelling, as Arms and Influence (1966) confirms, was the Clausewitz of nuclear theorists and the godfather of modern aerial coercion. His ideas therefore remain relevant, despite the lingering revulsion of airmen who remember the failures of Vietnam and oppose the gradual use of airpower as an instrument of "vicious diplomacy" in any guise. (Today, however, in a unipolar world where diplomatic conditions are more akin to the 1920s and 1930s, and where air technologies are no longer blunt and necessarily murderous instruments of war, airpower has a new role to play as a bargaining tool that symbolically relies on the punitive or exemplary use of force.)

Schelling defines aerial coercion as the power to hurt. It is a bargaining chip that is most effective when held in reserve, as he observes: "The threat of violence in reserve is more important than the commitment of force in the field".¹⁴ As already noted, this threat shapes the mind and expectations of an opponent, who you remind still has something to lose.

This process is particularly important in a post-cold war world where armed conflict has become nothing more than "a competition in risk taking, a military-diplomatic maneuver with or without military engagement but with the outcome determined more by manipulation of risk than by an actual contest of force."¹⁵ By shaping the cost-risk calculations of an opponent, therefore, Schelling hopes to make an enemy

behave. The goal is not an adversary's destruction, but to exact good behavior and prevent further political mischief.

However, to coerce or compel an adversary with air power-based threats requires several things. First, any bargaining process requires discrete and qualitative boundaries that both sides can recognize as "conspicuous stopping places, conventions and precedents to indicate what is within bounds and what is out of bounds. . . ." ¹⁶ Second, all bargaining must be based on actions, actions and words, but never words alone. Third, communications must be simple and form recognizable patterns, except in those limited instances where you want to send a deliberately ambiguous message. If you do not meet these preconditions, Schelling observes, threat-based diplomacy will lack the "high fidelity" it needs to succeed. And if you and your opponent do not communicate in the same "language" or "currency," you both may spin out of control into war.

Wars in a post-nuclear world, however, are by definition limited. According to Schelling, the combatants will ultimately commit themselves to some level of mutual restraint. As a result, current operational-level wars never lost their negotiatory character--they are "a bargaining process, one in which threats and proposals, counterproposals and counterthreats, offers and assurances, concessions and demonstrations, take the forms of actions rather than words, or actions accompanied by words." ¹⁷ Yet, while the bargaining continues, it is appropriate to deliberately manipulate the tempo of air operations. A gradualist approach works best, Schelling observes, since it gives your enemy the opportunity to receive and respond to your signals. Most importantly, it gives him the opportunity to communicate a willingness

to abandon his objectives or quit fighting, which are the ultimate goals of Schelling's approach.

Given the above premises as a general foundation, how can we then specifically employ American airpower as a coercive tool, particularly at the operational level of war? Obviously, we need tools to differentiate one type of coercion from another. In Bombing to Win (1996), Robert Pape provides these tools in the form of four questions.

First, what are the proper methods of aerial coercion? This question typically focuses on the meteorological constraints of an assault, the mix of aircraft and weapons one uses, and the actual tactics employed. However, given the growing importance of disruption and paralysis in coercion, the most important methodological issue at the moment is timing. In short, when should an assault occur? How long should it take? Should it be incremental, sequential, cumulative, or simultaneous? By answering these questions, the unified/regional CINC determines how to use time and space properly.

Second, which goals or targets are most important? Should the commander focus on aerial blockade, no-fly zones, enemy leaders, civilian populations, or fielded military forces? Are these goals or targets then important individually or in combination? (Unfortunately, airmen traditionally ask these specific--and critical--questions before resolving three even broader, more fundamental issues: what aspects of an enemy's power should you coerce, either individually or together; what type of coercion should you adopt; and what level of disruption or destruction do you want?)

Next, after you determine what particular goals to achieve or target sets to assault, you must then ask a third critical question--

what mechanism(s) do you expect your actions to trigger? In other words, what changes do you expect as a result of aerial coercion? Will it, for example, cause a palace coup, a military retreat, a popular revolt, or a decrease in the number of political risks your enemy is willing to take? Unfortunately, our ability to accurately identify mechanisms and their expected results remains poor. Over the last 80 years, airmen have become very effective in maximizing decisive physical and functional destruction. The linkage, however, between coercion and outcomes still remains unclear. Woven into each theory of air power are *a priori* assumptions about mechanisms that are not always obvious or necessarily wrong. As a result, airmen historically have not recognized mechanisms for what they are, if and when they looked at them at all.

Finally, you must ask what political outcomes you expect to happen from an act of coercion? Do you hope to supplant one leadership faction with another? Do you seek an actual change of government or merely political concessions? If the latter, what particular concessions do you want? Will the enemy abandon key interests if put under sufficient duress, or are your political goals inherently unreasonable?

The above tools (in the form of four basic questions) have tremendous utility for our political leaders, unified/regional CINCs, and their operational commanders. As Figure 1 illustrates, they highlight in bold relief six different types of aerial coercion that can function as a critical part of joint doctrine, particularly (but not exclusively) at the operational level of war.

	<u>TIMING</u>	<u>TARGET</u>	<u>MECHANISM</u>	<u>POLITICAL OUTCOME</u>
MAY	INCREMENTAL	POLITICAL LEADERSHIP	EXPLOIT FACTIONS	CHANGE LEADERS OR POLICIES
JANIS	IRREGULAR	LEADERSHIP OR POPULATION	NEAR MISS EXPERIENCES	CHANGE POLICIES
WARDEN	HYPERWAR: COMPRESS AND SPACE	LEADERSHIP + 4 RINGS	DECAPITATION AND/OR STRATEGIC PARALYSIS	CHANGE LEADER(S)
SHELLING	INCREMENTAL	LEADERSHIP	FUTURE COSTS AND RISKS CALCULATIONS	CHANGE POLICIES
BOYD	FAST TEMPO	COMMUNICATIONS	FASTER/SLOWER OODA LOOP	CHANGE POLICIES
PAPE	INCREMENTAL	MILITARY FORCES	THWART MILITARY STRATEGY	YIELD TERRITORY; CHANGE POLICIES

Six Types of Aerial Coercion (in War and Peace)

Fig. 1

Put another way, the NCA, or unified/regional CINCS could use punishment strategies to force a peacetime opponent to comply with their political will. The theories of Ernest May, Irving Janis, and Thomas Schelling all provide an intellectual scaffolding for the use of aerospace power in this limited political way. In all three cases, a CINC for example would use aerospace power to change the thinking of enemy leaders, either by attacking targets that somehow enhanced the domestic political strength of hostile political factions; undermining the psychological resolve of particular individuals (who would barely survive deliberate near-miss air attacks); or using the air option as a tool of on-going negotiation and vicious diplomacy, as Thomas Schelling suggests. If, however, we have to spill over into armed conflict, John Warden, John Boyd and

Robert Pape provide either a denial strategy, which tries to neutralize an opponent's military ability to wage war, or a decapitation strategy, which destroys or isolates an opponent's leadership, national communications, or other politico-economic centers. As in the case of the previous theorists, the point is simple: in a domestic political culture that has adopted progressive national interests, objectives, and grand strategies, the military option has no choice but to become more discriminate and capable of performing non-traditional political roles across a peace-war spectrum. American airpower, particularly at the operational level of war, has the template and the approaches to serve a security-military strategy based on escalation control, preventive diplomacy, and other pluralist ends.

III. The problems of aerial coercion and some solutions.

However, despite its sheer variety and possible utility, aerial coercion is not without its problems. If it is to succeed as an instrument of vicious diplomacy and signal sending in the future, whether at the operational level of war or even lower in the spectrum of conflict, its proponents must recognize and resolve the following problems, among others.

1. Large government bureaucracies are not rational, unitary actors. They often lack the necessary subtlety or unity of purpose required to bargain violently for a prolonged period of time.
2. The concept of signal-sending wrongly assumes that messages are always clearly given and received.
3. Diplomacy based on gradualism allows for adjustments, substitutions, and work-arounds by your opponent.
4. Diplomacy based on gradualism, rather than conveying your reasonableness and flexibility, may convey a negative impression, i.e., you may appear to lack resolve and/or be politically weak.

5. Diplomacy based on gradualism not only probes the political environment, it alters it. Therefore, the process of negotiation itself distorts the signals sent and received.
6. Diplomacy based on signal-sending wrongly assumes that the actors involved always perform costs-risks calculations that reach an identifiable breaking point. (In fact, the North Vietnamese never reached this point and most probably would never have done so.)
7. Vicious diplomacy wrongly assumes that governments necessarily care about their people, and that they will change their behavior to spare them further suffering.
8. Vicious diplomacy tends to emphasize tinkering with the status quo. It does not readily promote revolutionary change.
9. Protractedness, in any guise, is not an American trait of American diplomacy, vicious or not. As a nation, we may lack the capacity for prolonged signal sending.

Even though the above problems are real enough, they are not insoluble. As already noted, any bargaining process can establish discrete and qualitative boundaries that both sides can recognize as conspicuous stopping places to indicate what is within and out of bounds. Second, a coercer can ensure he bargains on actions, actions and words, but never on words alone. Third, a negotiator can deliberately make his communications simple and make sure they form recognizable patterns, except in those limited instances where he wants to send a deliberately ambiguous message. (To give an opponent additional time to react, for example.) For those who do not meet these preconditions, threat-based diplomacy might lack the "high fidelity" it needs to succeed. Further, practitioners of aerial coercion should remember that it is very important "to know who is in charge on the other side, what

why we have the hard choice between being clear so that he knows what we want or vague so that he does not seem too submissive when he complies."¹⁸ In short, coercers must rely on multidisciplinary staffs made up of civilian experts and military professionals who can accumulate and properly interpret near-real time intelligence, and therefore learn to manipulate an opponent through a full awareness of context. Last, in addition to analyzing your opponent as a rational, unitary actor, you can systematically analyze the organizational, bureaucratic, and cognitive-psychological factors that shape an opponent's vulnerability to aerial coercion. (See, for example, Graham Allison's Essence of Decision [1971], and the Naval War College's Strategy and Force Planning curriculum.) Clearly, the rapid dissemination and interpretation of information is critical in defeating the nine problems we previously identified. With the era of information dominance now upon us, the difficulties associated with coercion may not be as nettlesome as before.

IV. The progress of aerial coercion: a brief comparison.

Finally, if there is a need for aerial coercion to fill a current gap in our national security and military strategies (as already discussed); if there are various types of aerial coercion already identified and available to the NCA, unified/regional commanders, and local warfighters (as also discussed); and if there remain increasingly marginal problems in convincing others to do your bidding, the only requirement left is to briefly remind the reader (in the interest of space) that the use of aerial coercion has improved markedly, especially

when one compares Operation Rolling Thunder to the more recent Operation Deliberate Force.

In theory, Rolling Thunder (1965-1968) sought to apply limited force for calculable ends. Unfortunately, Air Force planners did not anticipate the constraints, risks, and uncertainties associated with the use of airpower in a fine-tuned, escalatory way. Second, since they had committed themselves to the naturally limited gamesmanship of vicious diplomacy, the planners assumed that the North Vietnamese--in a classic case of "mirror imaging"--were equally interested in reciprocal accommodation and self-restraint. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Hanoi's support for the insurgency in the South was total. As a result, the level of force used by the United States to persuade, intimidate, or coerce an enemy that saw the Vietnam War as a matter of national survival was woefully inadequate. Third, Air Force leaders based their own cost-benefits analyses on a faulty analogy. They assumed that if sufficiently provoked, Red China would intercede in Vietnam as it had in Korea. Again they were wrong and misunderstood the sizable commitment they could have made to properly manipulate Hanoi. Last, the coercers never asked or answered the right questions. Who was in charge, i.e., who were we signaling? We thought it was Ho Chi Mihn, but in fact he had relinquished day-to-day control of the government to a shadowy troika in the Politburo. What did the North Vietnamese treasure? We were never quite sure, but we constantly (and wrongly) denied that it was a nationalistic desire for a unified Vietnam. And so it went. Our cultural ignorance and political confusion turned a supposedly elegant exercise in aerial coercion into a half-hearted, much-too-episodic interdiction campaign.

In the case of Bosnia, we cannot claim that airpower alone coerced the Bosnian Serbs to the peace table. Among other reasons, the fall of Serbian enclaves in the summer of 1995 to enemy ground offensives, the partially successful move against the Serbian stronghold of Krajina, and the costs of four years of battlefield attrition and economic sanctions had predisposed the Serbs to pursue a negotiated settlement. However, because the air campaign had clear, achievable policy objectives and brought overwhelming force to bear (during 30-31 August and 5-14 September 1995, Allied aircraft conducted 2,400 attack sorties), not only did Deliberate Force lift the siege of Sarajevo, it immediately broke a long-standing deadlock and "triggered a sequence of events that lanced the boil of this war."¹⁹ In short, when the Serbs called our bluff we responded with an overwhelming amount of force. If Vietnam had taught us anything, it is that aerial coercion must be zealously pursued and knowledgeably applied if it is to succeed. Since we finally have these capabilities, it is time to include aerial coercion as a formal part of joint doctrines, for peacetime use and at all levels of war.

ENDNOTES

1. A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, February 1996), p. 1.
2. See Nicholas J. Wheeler, "Guardian Angel or Global Gangster: A Review of the Ethical Claims of International Society," Political Studies 44 (March 1996), pp. 123-135.
3. Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," Foreign Affairs 75 (January/February 1996), p. 20.
4. Graham Fuller, "The Next Ideology," Foreign Policy 101 (Winter 1995-1996), p. 149.

5. Wheeler, p. 131.
6. Ibid., p. 132.
7. See, for example, Stanley Hoffman, "The Crisis of Liberal Internationalism," Foreign Policy 101 (Winter 1995-1996), pp. 159-177.
8. Engagement and Enlargement, p. 12.
9. Secretary of the Air Force Sheila E. Widnall, "A Quiet Revolution," http://www.dtic.mil/airforcelink/pa/speech/current/A_Quiet_Revolutio.html, October 29, 1996, p. 3. (Accessed November 21, 1996.)
10. Walter Russell Mead, "Roller Coaster Capitalism," Foreign Affairs 76 (January/February 1997), p. 150.
11. John Cavanagh, "Failures of Free Trade," Washington Post, 23 January 1997, P. A17.
12. Ibid.
13. Robert A. Pape, Bombing to Win (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 4, 12, 15-16.
14. Schelling defines the essence of bargaining as follows: it is "the communication of intent, the perception of intent, the manipulation of expectations about what one will accept or refuse, the issuance of threats, offers, and assurances, the display of resolve and evidence of capabilities, the communication of constraints on what one can do, the search for compromise and jointly desirable exchanges, the creation of sanctions to enforce understandings and agreements, genuine efforts to persuade and perform, and the creation of hostility, friendliness, mutual respect, or rules of etiquette. Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 136, 143.
15. Ibid., 166.
16. Ibid., 134-35, 164.
17. Ibid., 142.
18. Ibid., 175.
19. Secretary of the Air Force Sheila E. Widnall, "Air Force Contributions to National Strategy," http://www.dtic.mil/airforcelink/pa/speech/current/Air_Force_Contributions_to_.html, May 10, 1996, p. 2. (Accessed November 21, 1996.)